CLAIMS

1.   A method of obtaining and processing information for creating a document, said method comprising:

(a) transmitting a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) evaluating the document information by utilizing stored properties for the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information; and

(c) receiving the document information from the remote terminal.

2.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) is performed by computer executable process steps included in the data packet before the document information is received.

3.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) is performed after the document information is received.

4.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the data packet is transmitted over an internet connection.

5.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the data packet comprises a Java applet.

6.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) includes evaluating whether thickness of the document is within a range capable of being accommodated by a specified binding.

7.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (b) includes evaluating whether a printed page is capable of being printed as specified, by considering a specified printing instruction for the printed page and also considering stored properties for a media type specified for the printed page.

8.   A method according to Claim 1, further comprising transmitting a confirmation message to the remote terminal after receiving the document information.

9.   A method according to Claim 1, wherein the data packet includes computer executable process steps to enable the user to preview an image of the document, as assembled.

10.   A method according to Claim 1, further comprising a step of (d) formatting the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the document.

11.   A method according to Claim 10, wherein step (d) comprises generating a list of materials required to create the document.

12.   A method of obtaining, processing and routing information for creating a document, said method comprising:

        (a) transmitting a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input
5   document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement

of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) receiving the document information from the remote terminal; and

(c) routing the document information to one of plural document

10   production locations based on a geographic distance from a specified location and based on capability to produce the document.

13.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein step (c) comprises routing the document information to a document production location which is a closest location to the specified location that is capable of producing the document.

14.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein the geographic distance is estimated based on zip code.

15.   A method according to Claim 12, further comprising a step of formatting the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the document.

16.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein the step of formatting the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the document comprises listing a type of printing required for each media used to create the document.

17.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein the document information is routed to a document production location via a wide area network.

18.   A method according to Claim 12, wherein the document information is routed to a document production location via an internet connection.

19.   A method according to Claim 12, further comprising a step of evaluating the document information by utilizing stored properties for the

components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information.

20. A method according to Claim 19, wherein the step of evaluating the document information is performed by computer executable process steps included in the data packet before the document information is received in step (b).

21. A method of obtaining and processing information for creating a document, said method comprising:

(a) transmitting a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet including:

5   (1) information to generate a user interface,

(2) information to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding, and

10   (3) computer executable process steps to evaluate the document information by utilizing stored properties for the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information;

(b) receiving the document information from the remote terminal; and

15   (c) formatting the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the document.

22. A method according to Claim 21, wherein the computer executable process steps in the data packet include a step to output an error message if it is not physically possible to create the document according to the document information.

23. A method according to Claim 21, wherein the computer executable process steps in the data packet include steps to evaluate at least one of: whether a page can be printed as specified and whether thickness of the document is within a range capable of being accommodated by a specified binding.

24. Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer readable medium, said process steps for obtaining and processing information for creating a document, said process steps comprising steps to:

(a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet 5 including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) evaluate the document information by utilizing stored properties for 10 the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information; and

(c) receive the document information from the remote terminal.

25. Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer readable medium, said process steps for obtaining, processing and routing information for creating a document, said process steps comprising steps to:

(a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet 5 including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) receive the document information from the remote terminal; and

10   (c) route the document information to one of plural document production locations based on a geographic distance from a specified location and based on capability to produce the document.

26.   Computer-executable process steps stored on a computer readable medium, said process steps for obtaining and processing information for creating a document, said process steps comprising steps to:

        (a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet

5   including:

        (1) information to generate a user interface,

        (2) information to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab

10   page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding, and

        (3) computer executable process steps to evaluate the document information by utilizing stored properties for the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information;

15   (b) receive the document information from the remote terminal; and

        (c) format the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the document.

27.   An apparatus for obtaining and processing information for creating a document, comprising:

        a processor for executing stored program instruction steps; and

a memory connected to the processor for storing the program

5   instruction steps,

wherein the program instruction steps include steps to:

(a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet

including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input

document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement

10   of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of:

a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) evaluate the document information by utilizing stored properties for

the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document

according to the document information; and

15   (c) receive the document information from the remote terminal.

28.   An apparatus for obtaining, processing and routing information for

creating a document, comprising:

a processor for executing stored program instruction steps; and

a memory connected to the processor for storing the program

20   instruction steps,

wherein the program instruction steps include steps to:

(a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet

including information to generate a user interface and to enable a user to input

document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement

25   of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of:

a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding;

(b) receive the document information from the remote terminal; and

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(c) route the document information to one of plural document production locations based on a geographic distance from a specified location and

30 based on capability to produce the document.

29. An apparatus for obtaining and processing information for creating a document, comprising:

a processor for executing stored program instruction steps; and

a memory connected to the processor for storing the program

5 instruction steps,

wherein the program instruction steps include steps to:

(a) transmit a data packet to a remote terminal, said data packet including:

(1) information to generate a user interface,

10 (2) information to enable a user to input document information, wherein the document information specifies an arrangement of components for creating a document, the components including at least two of: a printed page, a tab page, a front cover, a back cover, and a binding, and

(3) computer executable process steps to evaluate the

15 document information by utilizing stored properties for the components to determine whether it is physically possible to create a document according to the document information;

(b) receive the document information from the remote terminal; and

(c) format the document information so as to facilitate assembly of the

20 document.